

Serial No. 09/945,083
Amendment and Response to Office Action
Mailed 05 May 2005

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner stated that claims 1 - 16, 30, and 31 are allowed. The Examiner rejected claims 17, 19, 23, and 29 as being unpatentable over Banker et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,426,947) in view of Oppenheimer et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,282,270) and objected to claims 18, 20 - 22, and 24 - 28 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. The Examiner further stated that the objected claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of their respective base claims, and any intervening claims. By this paper, the Applicant has amended claims 18, 20, 21, and 24; and cancelled claims 17, 19, 23, and 29 as suggested by the Examiner. Claims: 1 - 16, 18, 20 - 22, 24 - 28, 30, and 31 are now pending. The amendments to the Claims do not add any new matter. In view of the forgoing amendments and the following remarks, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 17, 19, 23, and 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Banker et al. in view of Oppenheimer et al. The Applicant cancels claims 17, 19, 23, and 29.

Claims 18, 20, 21 and 24

Previously dependent Claims 18, 20, 21 and 24, have been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of their respective base claims, as suggested by the Examiner, and are therefore in a condition for allowance for this reason and by virtue of their further distinctive recitation.

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Claim 22

Regarding the claim 22, the Examiner objected as this claim was based indirectly upon claim 17 which was rejected. As intervening Claim 21 has been rewritten in independent form, Claim 22 now stands in a condition for allowance.

Claim 25 - 28

Regarding the claims 25 - 28, the Examiner objected as these claims were based indirectly upon claim 23 which was rejected. As intervening Claim 24 has been rewritten in independent form, Claim 25 - 28 now stand in a condition for allowance.

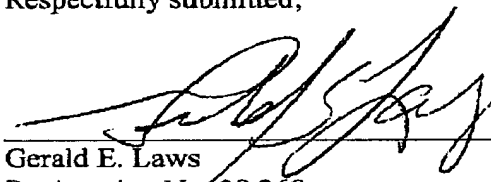
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Conclusion

The Applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. However, if the Examiner wishes to resolve any other issues by way of a telephone conference, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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